

For immediate release — Monday, April 20, 2026

Renowned archaeologist Robert Dawe to be granted honorary degree

A leading Alberta archaeologist and assistant curator at the Royal Alberta Museum, Robert (Bob) Dawe has had an enviable career, conducting fieldwork throughout Alberta, notably at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and Writing-On-Stone, and also across the Arctic from Alaska to Baffin Island, in Ontario and even China. For his devotion to preserving the history of Alberta, his passion for archaeology and enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge with Albertans, the University of Lethbridge will present Dawe with an honorary degree at Spring 2026 Convocation.

“Robert Dawe’s dedication to uncovering Alberta’s rich history is only matched by his commitment to engaging the public and educating how important it is to preserve our past,” says ULethbridge Chancellor Terry Whitehead (BA ’94). “His integral work with Indigenous communities has opened a window into history and emboldened Indigenous voices to embrace the interpretive process, benefitting all Albertans.”



Dawe will be bestowed with an honorary Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, at Spring 2026 Convocation, Ceremony II, Thursday, May 28, at 2:30 p.m. in the Co-op Centre for Sport & Wellness.

Robert (Bob) Dawe

With his considerable field experience, Robert Dawe’s involvement in archaeological projects has made him a leading expert in ancient Alberta heritage, extending back to the earliest Indigenous occupations. While his research and public outreach have taken him all over the province in his role working for the Royal Alberta Museum, his varied contributions to the southern Alberta archaeological record are noteworthy.

This participation includes surveying and documenting rock art at Writing-On-Stone, ongoing monitoring of the St. Mary Dam, working on the archaeological impact assessment of the mining heritage of the Crowsnest Pass, and more than four decades of involvement at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. His contributions include using photogrammetry to document rock art at Writing-On-Stone and retrieving a huge 1,600-year-old roasting pit from Head-Smashed-In for

display. With his research and contribution to the development of the interpretive program at Head-Smashed-In, Dawe has built strong relationships with the interpretive centre staff, members of the Piikani and Kainai communities, and ranchers in the area. He supported the Blackfoot staff in their interpretation of archaeological materials and their engagement with the public, in a practice that has since become known as Indigenous Archaeology, where Indigenous voices are welcomed as part of the interpretive process, benefiting the entire community.

Dawe's involvement at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump has also had an important effect on the University of Lethbridge and its students. He has served as co-director of the current field school there, organized by ULethbridge archaeology professors Drs. Shawn Bubel and Kevin McGeough. With his endless patience, many students come to see him as a mentor because he puts their education first.

Dawe's knowledge of ancient technology has led to numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference papers. His research approach is innovative and driven by his curiosity about how people lived in the past. His passion for archaeology knows no bounds, and Albertans are richer because of it.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/renowned-archaeologist-robert-dawe-be-granted-honorary-degree>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.